



Trainers Take to Videos

Our favorites feature clickers, treats and praise

by Pat Miller

In the not-too-distant past, you had to read a book if you wanted to learn from the best in the modern field of positive dog training. Not any more. Today dog training videos abound and have started to make inroads in the DVD market.

In fact, so many videos are out there now, if you're not careful, you could easily end up with tapes that advocate the use of old-fashioned force-based methods. Some fairly graphic ones show trainers jerking on leashes, dragging dogs on the ground and worse.

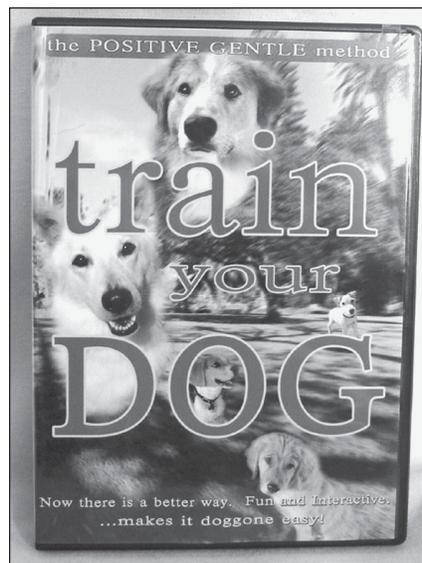
We know Your Dog readers are more educated and sophisticated than that, so we're sharing a handful of our favorites – some new, some older – to help you find resources in line with your training philosophy. These basic training and behavior videos will help you and your favorite canine start off together on positive paws. They're available on individual Web sites as noted and at www.dogwise.com, (800) 776-2665.

New Treasures

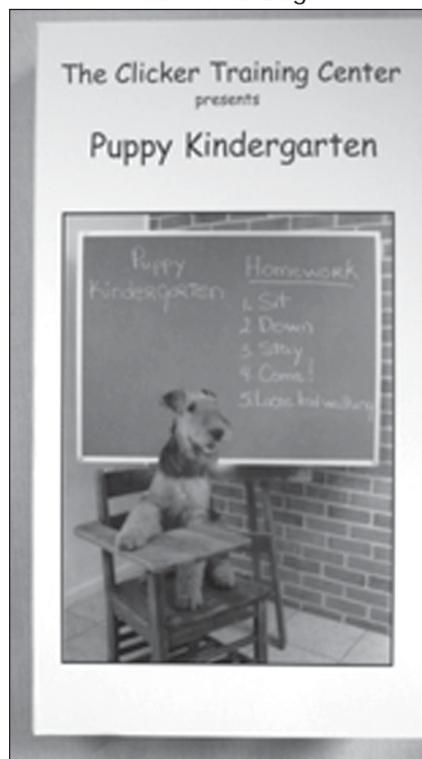
Train Your Dog: The Positive Gentle Method: DVD, 1 hour 32 minutes; featuring Nicole Wilde, Certified Pet Dog Trainer, and Laura Bourhenne; released in 2003 from Picture Palace, Inc.,

www.PictureCompany.com, (818) 981-0252; \$19.95.

This new-kid-on-the-block DVD is a fantastically useful resource for any dog owner who wants to train using positive methods. Far more



'Train Your Dog'



'Puppy Kindergarten'

than a basic training video, the disc includes numerous sections:

A Basic behaviors – sit, down, stay, come, heel.

A Good manners behaviors – leave it, give, touch, wait, gentle, go to bed.

A Behavior issues – housetraining, crate training, jumping up, nipping, use of management tools.

A Bonus materials – leadership, car safety, at the park, rewards and corrections, clicker, toys, treats and more!

Wilde of Santa Clarita, Calif., is the author of four books on training, including one on wolf hybrids. Bourhenne is an animal trainer with a degree from Moorpark College in exotic animal training. She now works exclusively with pet dogs and their families in the Hollywood, Calif., area. Both trainers are committed to positive methods and philosophies, and use untrained dogs to demonstrate their techniques.

They present their material in a relaxed, upbeat manner, showing by example that dog training can be fun, gentle, fast and effective. They encourage the use of a reward marker, such as a clicker or the word "Yes!" – although they aren't totally consistent with its use. They also include a section on clicker training. A clicker is a little plastic box with a metal tongue that makes a clicking noise when pressed – the reward marker commonly used by many positive trainers.

Wilde and Bourhenne take time to clearly explain what they're doing. They demonstrate possible backup techniques when the primary method doesn't work and clarify common misconceptions

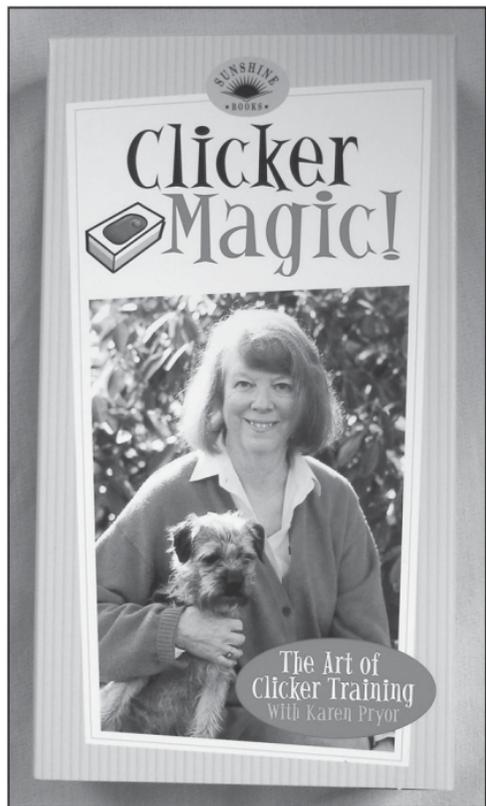
YOUR DOG'S PRODUCT COMPARISONS REFLECT TESTING AND EVALUATIONS BY THE WRITERS OF YOUR DOG AND ARE INDEPENDENT OF TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE.



PRODUCTS

about positive training, such as the important point that “positive” does not equal permissive and the difference between “lure” and “reward.” With luring, you use a treat to coax the dog to offer the behavior. For rewards, the treat is presented only after the dog offers the behavior.

The DVD format is perfect for this training video. You can easily click on the section you want to watch and review the exercise you’re working on without having to fast-forward through long sections of tape. If you’re looking for an informative, affordable, entertaining and easy-to-use how-to video, this should be at the top of your list. It’s at the top of mine.



While most of the information she presents is accurate, we take issue with a couple of things. In her introduction, while presenting an excellent discussion on puppy development, she implies that operant conditioning – the use of reinforcers and/or punishers to increase or decrease behavior – is the same as positive training, when in fact positive reinforcement is just one of four principles of operant conditioning.

These principles also include the use of “positive punishment” – the application of aversive consequences (physical or verbal punishment) for undesirable behaviors. Clicker trainers rarely make use of positive punishment, it’s true, but it’s still a part of operant conditioning.